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Public Relations
667 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 421-6720

December 31, 1970

Mr. Amos Vogel
Evergreen
15 Washington Place
New York City 10003

Dear Amos;

As promised, enclosed please find additional information on the first USA Film Festival to be held in Dallas March 8th - 14th. The co-directors, L.M. Kit Carson and Dr. G. William Jones will be in New York January 7th for a few days and will be available for interviews.

They are both quite interesting - Kit, at age 29, has racked up some impressive credits as a writer, scenarist, actor and filmmaker. At the moment he is co-directing "American Dreamer," the real story of Dennis Hopper, starring Dennis Hopper.

Dr. Jones is head of the Cinema department at Southern Methodist University and his many outside activities include his being Commissioner on the U.S. Committee investigating Obscenity and Pornography. For both of them, bringing the USA Film Festival into being has been a labor of love - with neither of them receiving any financial remuneration for their efforts.

I'll call you the early part of the week to see if you'd be interested in doing something on this for Evergreen.

Best regards,

Suzanne Salter

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THE FESTIVAL

The USA Film Festival will be held at Southern Methodist University's Bob Hope Theatre, March 8th - 14th, 1971. This festival will be an annual affair, paying tribute to both the new American film, its heritage as a leader of world cinema and its recent resurgence to the forefront of experimentation and innovation; and to its directors, to those who have broken the barriers between art and entertainment to bring us movies which are sometimes more art than entertainment, sometimes more entertainment than art, but always unmistakably both.

Each year the festival will show fourteen programs of the best American films, regardless of type and categorizing only to the two classes of "under 60 minutes" and "over 60 minutes." The films will be selected from film-makers across the country and will not have been shown in theatrical release by the time of the festival. The publicity and advertising of the festival will be on a nation-wide scale.

The abilities of some of America's most respected critics will be utilized in finding and lifting to light the films of this new breed of American director. The selection committee of the 1971 USA Film Festival will include Dwight Macdonald, film critic for The New York Times and formerly with Esquire; Andrew Sarris, film critic for The Village Voice; Willard van Dyke, Chairman of the film department of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Jonas Mekas, founder of the Film-Makers Cooperative; P. Adams Sitney, editor of Film Culture; Paul Shraeder, editor of Cinema; Charles Champlin, film critic for The Los Angeles Times; and Gerald Nachman, film critic for The Oakland Tribune. This committee is a montage of the best of American movie-consciousness today.

Each year, in addition to its contemporary program, the festival will also honor a classic American director with a selected retrospective showing of that director's films. In 1971, director George Stevens (Giant, Shane, A Place in the Sun, etc.) will be honored guest of the festival.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE USA FILM FESTIVAL

Just as Dallas' existence as the third largest center of motion picture production in the U.S. seems a secret withheld from the consciousness of most Dallasites, the new world-wide respect for the American movie seems to go largely unrecognized and uncelebrated by most Americans. However, a new consciousness is emerging throughout the country which may well overcome the embarrassment Americans have long felt toward claiming the title of "art" for their own Hollywood movies, retreating in shame to leave this title for the European products of Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, Truffaut, et al.

This new consciousness lies in a recognition that the movie is the U.S.A.'s own true art. It all started here in 1877, when Governor Leland Stanford's horse trotted down past Edward Muybridge's row of cameras to become the first zoopraxinoscope. Now suddenly, in the last few years, the movie seems to start all over again in the U.S.A.; even the European filmmakers admit that the most exciting developments in the art of movie-making are happening here with movies like "Easy Rider", "Medium Cool", Midnight Cowboy", "The Graduate", and a host of other fine films which have broken the barrier that has long existed in this country between entertainment and art becoming both. Something is needed which will dramatize and lift to self-consciousness in Americans the new stature of the American film, and particularly of the new breed of American directors, both of the professional and non-professional estates. A project such as the USA Film Festival will be the answer to this need.

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PROCEEDS FROM THE FESTIVAL

Southern Methodist University's Department of Broadcast-Film Art, now in its sixth year, is an exciting educational innovation turning out some of the most sensitive and able young filmmakers anywhere in the world today. The Festival is proud to announce that the entire proceeds from its presentation will be used each year to establish grants, fellowships and scholarships for this department. The art of filmmaking differs somewhat from the other fine arts in that its execution is for the most part considerably more expensive due to the highly technical and sophisticated nature of the equipment needed for its creation. Nothing impedes the new film department so much as inadequate funds for sophisticated equipment, film processing and financing of promising but needy students. SMU's Department of Broadcast-Film Art promises to rank second to none in the world given the necessary financial support.

It is expected that the attention and support of this annual festival will thus aid the American film in its struggle to realize its great potential as the Twentieth Century's only new and most characteristic art form, and will help to create more discerning audiences which are needed to encourage more excellent films. It will offer Dallas a significant cultural program of America's finest motion pictures, and as such will contribute to the intellectual and artistic growth of the community. It will annually benefit a most worthwhile cause. It will act as a stimulus to the creativity of local film-makers, thus assuring Dallas of its place in the development of the art of this generation - the art of the film.

The USA Film Festival is a non-profit, tax-exempt project which depends upon donors and subscribers for its development and growth. Donations may be made payable to SMU Department of Broadcast-Film Art, and sent to USA Film Festival, Meadows School of the Arts, S.M.U., Dallas, Texas, 75222. For any further information call (214) 363-5611, ext. 2402.

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CONTACT: SUZANNE SALTER FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE

AWARD FILMS TO BE SHOWN AT FIRST U.S.A. FILM FESTIVAL; PROCEDURE FOR FILM ENTRY ANNOUNCED

Procedure for the entry of films in the first U.S.A. Film Festival, to be held in Dallas in March, has been announced by G. William Jones and L.M. Kit Carson, co-directors of the festival.

"We hope to present the entire range of American films," according to Jones. "Any motion picture directed by a United States citizen -- whether 8, Super 8, 16 or 35 millimeter (no magnetic tracks or separate tapes) -- is eligible. The films must be meant for public performance -- no commercials or industrial films as such -- and not in general release until after March 14, 1971.

"The festival pays tribute to the new American film, its heritage as a leader of world cinema and its recent resurgence to the forefront of experimentation and innovation. Tribute is also paid to its directors, to those who have broken the barriers between art and entertainment to bring us movies which are unmistakably both."

Major studio films will be an important part -- an earlier, localized "dry run" of the festival last Spring presented world premieres of such films as "Woodstock" and "MASH". But the work of all film makers will be considered.

The abilities of some of America's most respected critics will be utilized in deciding on the films to be presented. Special awards will be

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presented to all films selected by the committee and only award films will be programmed for showing during the seven days of the Festival, which runs from March 8th through March 14th.

The selection committee of the 1971 USA Film Festival includes Dwight Macdonald, former Esquire critic and now a writer for the New York Times; Pauline Kael, film critic for the New Yorker; Andrew Sarris, film critic for the Village Voice; Charles Champlin, film critic for the Los Angeles Times; Gerald Nachman, film critic for the Oakland Tribune; Willard Van Dyke; chairman of the film department of the Museum of Modern Art; Jonas Mekas, founder of the Film-Makers Cooperative; P. Adams Sidney editor of Film Culture; Paul Schraeder, editor of Cinema. This committee is a montage of the best of American movie-consciousness today.

Films to be submitted for judging must be accompanied by an entry blank and the appropriate entrance fee. The Festival has established entrance fees of $10 for films under sixty minutes and $25 for films sixty minutes or more. Entry blanks and additional information are available from the headquarters of the USA Film Festival, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. All films and entry forms should be in Dallas for Screening Committee viewing not later than February 1st, 1971.

In addition to its contemporary program, the festival will also honor a classic American director with a selected retrospective showing of that director's films. In 1971, director George Stevens ("Shane," "Giant," "Place in the Sun," etc.) will be honored guest of the festival. The Stevens retrospective is being mounted with the cooperation of The American Film Institute.

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December 22, 1970

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